

From William R. Davie

Halifax Decr. 19h. 1788

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 7h. this evening; which relieved me from some apprehensions that you might not have got the letter I addressed to you at Newbern.¹ I am sensible of the delicacy of our situation with respect to the correction and publication of the debates, and I really begin to feel no small pain on the subject of getting them printed; enclosed are Robinsons and Turnbolls letters to me on this subject, from which you will be convinced that the business is altogether inpracticable in Virginia.² you know best whether it could be done at Edenton—At Newbern the Printer is not equal to such a task <of business,> at Wilmington I suppose the foolish quarrel between M—ne and the Printer would probably embarrass the business, perhaps prevent it altogether.³ thus situated I think it cannot be done on this side Philadelphia, unless <Arnett> /Wills/ and Hodge would undertake it—We are pledged in some measure to the proprietors of the copy to see this matter affected, and the difficulty of the business has given me infinite concern; I have written to Williamson on the subject, and expect some answer by the next or following post. Supposing from Robinsons silence he did not mean to undertake it himself; I would much rather they had been printed under his direction than our own, as it would have precluded all possibility of reflection with respect to corrections or alterations; I have had some of my speeches which were most defectively taken or rather copied (for I believe it was in the copying we were injured) copied over again in a fair Hand, making no alterations except where /the/ sense was entirely perverted; in this I hold myself perfectly justifiable; with respect to the sanction of Mr. Robinson, I wish most sincerely he would give us a fair copy, compared and corrected by his short-hand manuscript; but this I know we need not hope—The whole of the pages we have except a few are copied by a little boy the son of Mr. Turnbull: this is the reason that the copy is so blotched and incorrect, and he would not take the trouble to copy it again himself—you will perceive by a note at the bottom of his letter respecting a speech of Spencers that the delicacy he pretended on the subject of the copy and corrections appearing in his Hand writing was all effectation—nuller fides fronte say'd poor Strap⁴—There was nothing Sir in all this appearance—The money was all he was concerned in—As to the curiosity of the Public on this subject; I am well convinced nobody will trouble their heads in this about the correction of the press or the copy, and every